



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Georgia Parliamentary Elections**

Delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 6, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We were following with great interest as Georgian voters went to the polls this past Sunday to vote in parliamentary elections. As you may know, the United States committed a total of \$2.4 million to help Georgia prepare for these elections. Since the count is still underway, we consider today's statement to be a preliminary one.

The OSCE fielded a large mission of 450 observers for this election. And the observer mission noted in its preliminary findings that the inaccuracies in the voter list seriously challenged the fundamental guarantee of universal and equal suffrage. We concur with the OSCE's assessment and express our own disappointment that the climate of uncertainty and lack of trust continues to plague the vote count.

We are concerned about delays in reporting the election results and urge the Central Election Commission to complete the vote count as quickly as possible. Timely, transparent, and accurate tabulation and reporting is essential to enhancing the credibility of Georgia's election and to restoring voter confidence.

As results are tabulated in the parliamentary elections in Georgia, we call upon all parties and candidates to refrain from threats or the use of violence.

The OSCE observer mission noted in its preliminary findings that the elections fell short of a number of OSCE commitments, but that certain aspects of the election demonstrated significant progress, particularly the passage of the Unified Election Code and increased transparency of the new Central Election Committee. We support that conclusion.

We appreciate the efforts of the OSCE Mission in Tbilisi as it continues to monitor the election, and we will continue to follow developments closely and hope that the voice of the people of Georgia may still be heard.